

# Pest Update (January 6-14, 2010)

Vol. 8, no. 1

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## Available on the net at:

<http://www.state.sd.us/doa/Forestry/educational-information/Pest-Alert-Archives.htm>.

Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement or the exclusion a criticism regarding effectiveness. Please read and follow all label instructions and the label is the final authority for a product's use on a particular pest or plant. Products requiring a commercial pesticide license are occasionally mentioned if there are limited options available. These products will be identified as such but it is the reader's responsibility to determine if they can legally apply any product identified in this publication.

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## E-samples



### The case of the bark-less oaks.

Aaron, the city forester in Aberdeen, noticed about two years ago that young oaks were being girdled, often near the tops of these trees during the winter. This injury is often associated with squirrels and these furry creatures can be found girdling oak, maple and hackberry branches during the winter. Rabbits, mice and voles will also remove bark from trees but their feeding injury is usually close to the

ground. The culprit attacking Aaron's tree was finally discovered one day as a male downy woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) was found on one of the trees. Woodpeckers can be a serious problem on small trees (and cedar or redwood siding on homes). They are beneficial in removing wood-boring insects from



infested trees though the bark injury they create in the process of excavating the insects often negate this positive. This winter Aaron was able to dig out some of the insects that the woodpeckers are feasting on and these turned out to be the oak bark scarrer (*Enaphalodes cortiphagus*). The insect can result in wood defects, though is mostly a minor problem in oak forests. The primary control is not a chemical but woodpeckers, these are noted at being

very effective at locating these small larvae!

Male woodpeckers also begin 'drumming' certain trees and house siding at this time of year to establish territory and there does not seem to be much involved in the selection process but once they decide on a tree (or home) they can destroy the material with their drilling.



Sapsuckers are another woodpecker that drill holes into the trees during warm winter days and remove the small amount of sap that collects in the wound site. They tend to pick on certain species and concentrate on particular trees so sometimes a severely injured tree will appear as though someone was shooting the bark away. The winter is spent feeding on a wide range of species (about 270) including oaks with conifers being preferred in the spring and birch

and mountainash being summer food sources. There is not much that can be done about the problem, either from woodpeckers or sapsuckers, once the tree is girdled completely around the trunk but if you catch the bird in the act early on it can be discouraged by spreading Tanglefoot around the most recent holes or covering the same area with hardware cloth (though remember to remove the cloth in the spring so it does not girdle the tree).

## Information request

### Which trees, shrubs, and conifers are poisonous to horses?

I had a call just before Christmas regarding which trees are poisonous to horses. South Dakota has numerous small acreages with horses and with the reluctance

to plant ash due to the looming threat of emerald ash borer. Here is a list of the most common woody plants found in South Dakota that are poisonous to horses.

- Black locust - new shoots and foliage

- Black walnut - shoots, foliage and nut, even the wood contains toxins and should not be used as chips in bedding

- Buckeye - wilted foliage and nut

- Chokecherry - wilted foliage

- Red and Freeman maples – foliage is considered highly poisonous to horses!

- Oaks (primarily members of the red oak group) - new shoots and leaves, acorns

- Yews - foliage and berry-like cones